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Ottawa -- Any changes or improvements to the CBC English Radio and Stereo Services in the province of British Columbia must unfortunately be delayed, it was announced today by Michael McEwen, Vice-President, CBC English Radio and Eric Moncur, Regional Director, British Columbia.

The announcement follows yesterday's four decisions by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regarding the Corporation's British Columbia Radio Improvement Plan announced October 30, 1987.

"The Commission has attempted to detach some elements of the Plan from the others, and has proposed changes which require incremental resources," Michael McEwen said.

The Plan called for an FM Stereo transmitter to bring the full CBC Stereo service to Victoria and nearby areas which currently cannot receive it. The Plan also would have made it possible for CBC Radio to offer local and sub-regional service, for the first time, to almost an additional million British Columbians. The Plan noted that there would be an expanded Victoria news bureau, news production bureaus opened in Kelowna and Prince George, supported by contributing units in Kamloops and Prince Rupert. A key element of the Plan called for these new bureaus to produce morning shows and other information programming for the southern and northern sectors of the province respectively, as well as to contribute to regional and national programming.


Mr. McEwen emphasized that the Corporation, both in its application and at the Hearings, made it very clear that this was an integrated and self-financing Plan, each of whose parts was contingent on the rest, and which could only be implemented by redirecting existing resources within the province.

Specifically, the Plan was to be achieved without any additional capital expenditures or increases in annual operating costs. To fund the recommended changes, the Plan called for the cancellation of the existing regional morning show, DAYBREAK and the reduction of the size of the existing station in Prince Rupert.

"Although we have not yet had time to analyze yesterday's CRTC decisions in detail, we note the positive support for the BC Radio Improvement Plan, and in particular, the principle of storefronting to extend the services to currently unserved areas. However, the cumulative effect of some elements of the decisions is to substantially alter the Plan as we presented it. Until we have completed further review and analysis of the technical, programming and financial implications, any changes or improvements in our radio service in BC will have to wait," Mr. McEwen said.

With regard to Victoria Stereo, although approved in principle, the requirement for submitting changed technical parameters is disappointing.

"At the Hearings, we went through all the options, and demonstrated that Channel 221C on Saltspring Island was the best. We will now have to look at alternatives," Eric Moncur said.



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With regard to Prince Rupert, the requirement to continue originating programs there would force the Corporation to reduce or eliminate service elsewhere where it exists or is proposed -- and where there are many more unserved people.

"Again, we will have to look once more at all the options. However, we did this before applying, and still believe that the proposals we brought forward are the best possible ones, given available resources," Mr. Moncur said.

Mr. McEwen noted that the Corporation welcomes the approval of the bureaus in Kelowna and Prince George. "However, we must note that they remain in jeopardy, pending solutions in Prince Rupert and Victoria. We hope that a solution can eventually be found which addresses the Commission's concerns while still making it possible for the Corporation to redeploy its scarce resources more effectively," he said.

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With regard to Project Impact, the responsibility is on the individual
programs there would be the responsibility to reduce or eliminate
the impact wherever there is a problem -- and where there is
any more, however people.

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